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EXPONENT OF AHMADIYYA ISLAM AND OF ITS WORLD-WIDE REVIVALISTIC ACTIVITIES.

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Editor

NUR-UD-DIN MUNEER M A

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Dreams, Visions and Revelations of the Promised Messiah Denoting his Divine Commission

In my early youth I saw in a dream that I was in a magnificent building which was very clean and neat where people were talking about the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace). I enquired from the people where the Holy Prophet was and they pointed to a room which I entered along with other persons. When I presented myself to him he was much pleased, and returned my greeting with a better greeting. I can still recall and can never forget his charm and beauty and the kind and affectionate look that he directed towards me. He won my heart with his love and the beauty and glory of his countenance. He asked me: Ahmad, what are you holding in your right hand? I looked and found that I had a book in my right hand and I felt that I had written it myself so I answered him: This is something I have written. He inquired: What is the name of your book? I was surprised and looked at the book a second time and felt that it resembled a book in my library which was called Qutbi, so I answered him: Messenger of Allah, this book is called Qutbi. He said: Show me this book Qutbi. When he took it in his hand it immediately became a delicious and attractive fruit. He cut it as fruit is cut and pure honey began to flow out of it like water and I perceived the wetness of honey on the Holy Prophet's right hand and arm from his fingers to his elbow which were dripping with honey. I also felt that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) was showing me all this in order to make me wonder. Then it occurred to me that there was the dead body of a person lying outside the door who had been destined by Allah, the Exalted, to be brought to life by that fruit and that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) was to bestow life upon him. When this thought passed through my mind I saw that the dead person had suddenly come to life and had come up to me running and was standing behind my back but that he was in a weak

condition as if he was hungry. Then the Holy Prophet looked at me smiling and cut the fruit into several pieces and ate one of them himself and gave the rest to me while they were dripping with honey and said to me: Ahmad, give one of the pieces to this person so that he might draw strength from it. I gave him a piece and like a greedy person he devoured it immediately.

I then saw that the chair in which the Holy Prophet was sitting began to rise till it reached up to the ceiling and I noticed that his face began to shine as if reflecting the rays of the sun and the moon. I was watching his blessed countenance and my eyes were running because of my strong emotion. Then I woke up and I was still weeping.

Allah, the Exalted, put it in my mind that the dead person in my dream was Islam and that Allah, the Exalted would revive it at my hands through the spiritual power of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace). You cannot know that this time may well be near,so wait eagerly for it. In this dream the Holy Prophet (On whom be peace) nurtured me with his blessed hands through his holy works and his light and the gift of fruit from his blessed garden (Ayena Kamalat-e- Islam pp. 548-549).

★

Revelation (Arabic): I shall humiliate him who designs to humiliate thee. This is a grand revelation and prophecy which has been fulfilled in various ways in diverse manners. Whoever attempted to bring my Movement into contempt was humiliated and frustrated (Nazool-ul-Masih P. 189).

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On one occasion I received a revelation which indicated that there was a difference among the higher angels with reference to God's design to bring about a renaissance of Islam as to the person through whom it should be brought about (Braheen Ahmadiyya part IV pp. 502 sub footnote 3).

At the same time I saw in a dream that a search was being made for one who should revive the faith. A person appeared before me and pointing to me said (Arabic): This is a man who loves the Messenger of Allah. His meaning was that the principal condition of this assignment was the love of the Holy Prophet and I fulfilled that condition (Braheen Ahmadiyya part IV p. 503 sub footnote 3).

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I recall that one night I was so occupied with calling down blessings on the Holy Prophet that my heart and soul became fragrant therewith. The same night I saw in my dream that people were carrying into my house waterskins filled with divine light in the form of water and one of them said: These are the blessings which you had sent to Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family.)

On one occasion it so happened that for a long time I remained occupied with calling down blessings on the Holy Prophet, for I believe that the ways leading to God are mysterious and cannot be discovered except through the Holy Prophet, as Allah directs: Seek out ways of approach unto Him (5:36). After a time I saw in a vision that two water-carriers came into my house, one by the outer entrance and the other by the inner entrance carrying suspended

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from their shoulders waterskins full of divine light and they said: This is what you called down upon Muhammad (Haqeeqat-ul-Wahi P. 128 footnote).

Thereafter I received the revelation (Arabic): Thou art indeed on the right path. Proclaim widely that which thou art commanded and turn away from the ignorant ones. They ask whence have you obtained this? This is a stratagem that you have devised in the town. They look towards thee but do not see thee. Allah calls Himself to witness that We have sent revelation to many before you but Satan beguiled their followers. Say to them: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will then love you. Know well that Allah revives the earth after its death. He who becomes Allah's, Allah becomes his. Say to them: If I have invented it on my own, the heavy sin thereof is on me. To-day you are a man of established position and trust with Us, and My mercy is upon you in worldly matters and matters of faith and you are among those who are helped. Allah praises thee and is coming to thee. Hearken: the help of Allah is near. Holy is He who took along with Him His servant in the night.

The last revelation means that in this age of error and misguidance which is dark as the night, God has of His own guided His servant to insight and certainty.

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Revelation (Arabic): Thy Lord is Powerful and does whatever He determines. Call to mind the bounty that I have bestowed upon thee. I have exalted thee above the people of thy time.

It should be remembered that this exaltation is partial and is derivative; that is to say, whoever follows the Seal of the Prophets perfectly, ranks in the estimation of Allah above his contemporaries. All true and perfect exaltation has been bestowed by the One on the Seal of the Prophets. All others are rewarded according to their degree of love and obedience to him. Observe then how high is the degree of his perfection. Allah, send down Thy blessings on him and his people.

(Tadhkira, English Edition).

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HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH'S ADDRESS

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TO LAJNA IMAILLAH IJTIMA

The following is the address which Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III gave to Lajna Imaillah, on the occasion of their annual Ijtimaa held in Rabwah on November 3, 1978. English rendering by Nur-ud-Din Muneer M.A. (Editor)

Pegging his address on the Quranic verse :

من عمل صالحاً من ذكر او انثى و هو
مومن فلنحيينه حيوة طيبة و لنجزينهم
اجرهم باحسن ما كانوا يعملون

i.e. Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely grant him a pure life, and We will surely bestow on such their reward according to the best of their works (16 : 98), he said :

According to Islam the blessings of God are not a prerogative of men only. Women equally share it. The doors of earning God's love are open to both men and women. Whosoever from among them would forsake his or her selfish desires and lose themselves in God will become deserving of His love and Mercy. A woman will stand equal to man in this respect and may even surpass some of them in attaining nearness to her Creator.

The period of time which we have entered now holds a special significance. A great event, greater than which is inconceivable, has taken place. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi has been raised and he has appeared among us. He has come in fulfilment of the glad tidings given by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) and he has come to usher a new era of the glory of Islam. He will gather the whole mankind in the fold of Islam and congregate them as one family under the flag of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him). This revolution which will turn the whole humanity into one brotherhood of Islam, is to be brought about by the Promised Mahdi, and this is the greatest event of this age.

The advent of the Promised Messiah is a great event in this sense also that Islam will now be revived. Islam had touched the lowest ebb of its fortune. It had decayed and anti-Islamic forces were bent upon destroying it. The west had literally finished it with its thousands of objections and made it look savage and detestable. The Promised Messiah has told us that the number of objections levelled against it by Chrisitans alone comes to 3000. The objections raised by the Jews, Hindus, Atheists and polytheists defy counting. Doubtlessly it was a tragic mo-

ment for Islam. Its very survival was in jeopardy. The Christians, its inveterate enemies were confident that its days were numbered and that its extinction was only a matter of time. They were openly declaring that it will be wiped out of India so completely that not a single Muslim will be seen in it. They were boasting of conquering Africa also and finally of hoisting the flag of cross on the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

But the Promised Messiah and Mahdi dashed their hopes to ground. He refuted their criticisms conclusively and provided us with guidelines for confuting every kind of objections against Islam. So he saved it from destruction.

God Almighty invested him with all that knowledge which was necessary on the one hand for the defence of Islam and on the other for resolving the problems facing mankind and for removing the tension gripping them at the moment. Islam is not in need of sword or atom bombs for its conquests. Islam wins the hearts with love and affection and with these weapons alone it will even now overcome the whole world. The Promised Messiah raised a community to carry on his work after him That community is you. So it is your responsibility now to win humanity for Islam with love and affection and with the force of arguments which the Promised Mehdi has furnished in support of its truth.

This responsibility rests equally upon Ahmadi men and Ahmadi women. The Quranic verse which I recited in the beginning holds them both responsible. So this battle for the supermacy of Islam has to be fought by both men and women and none of them can be exempted. Then this battle has to be fought on two fronts. Externally, Ahmadies have to present a true picture of Islam to all non-Muslims and so to draw them to its fold. Internally, they have to reform themselves and their children so that their conduct conforms to the teachings of Islam. This battle shall go on to the end of time. We have to carry it on patiently and perseveringly and keep steady watch on both the fronts. Every husband should see that his wife is valiantly fighting on both the fronts and every wife should see to it that her husband is also waging this war courageously. The parents should watch their children and guide them in absorbing Islamic teachings and in adopting its ways of conduct. Lajna also has to play its part in the materialization of this scheme. It should keep its branches awake and carry them forward in the march of progress. Lajna is on the whole doing good work but it has some weak points also. I have grown a little apprehensive about its efficiency. For instance it has failed to keep all its branches fully represented in its Annual Ijtemaa. Rather its achievement is steadily going downward in this respect. The number of branches who send their delegates in the Annual Ijtimaa is falling every year. Lajna should look into it and try to rectify the state of affairs.

I am a humble servant of God. God Almighty has made me a successor of the Promised Mahdi. In this capacity I have to follow his injunctions and make the whole Jamaat also to do the same. The task entrusted to the Promised Mahdi is very great and its realization requires Herculean efforts. The Promised Mahdi was wont to take brisk strides in the accomplishment of his work and he expected his followers to keep pace with him.

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He had declared that whosoever was unable to do so might leave him. The same choice I extend to you If anybody among you is unable to exert properly for the glory of Islam he may leave me. Why should he behave hypocritically. A hypocrite, according to the Holy Quran will be thrown in the lowest and the darkest regions of hell. The last and a crucial battle is being fought with Satan. He has mobilized all his resources against Islam and is dealing it a death blow We must all realise the gravity of the situation. All our organisations like Ansarullah, Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, Atfalul Ahmadiyya and Lajna Imaillah must have a correct appraisal of the danger at present posed to Islam. They all must gird up their loins and repel the attack forcefully.

I must warn the Lajna again about their duties and responsibilities. As I said in the beginning they are equally responsible for regenerating Islam. They have to fight in this battle shoulder to shoulder with their men. If they become idle, they will be taken to task. I must say to them also that whoever among them fears that she is unable to carry on this struggle properly she may get out of the community instead of keeping in it as a hypocrite. God Almighty may strengthen you and enable you to offer adequate sacrifices in the cause of Islam. Womenfolk constitute nearly one half of the strength of our community. If they behave paralytically our work will suffer an irreparable loss. You should, therefore, realise that the glory of Islam is at stake and you have to redeem it.

In the recent tour of Europe I had an opportunity to meet with people and to sense their trends. Some of the press reporters who interviewed me were wondering about the paucity of our missionaries and mission houses in Europe. They said that it was inappropriate with our claim of Islamising the whole of Europe. I told them that we were watching the changes which were occuring in the continent and the moment we found that the ground was set we would send say, one thousand missionaries to Switzerland alone. But let the right time come.

This shows how Europe is thinking about us. But I may tell you that the right time may come very soon. We may have to send thousands of missionaries to the western nations. The question is whether we are ready to do so. Please ponder on it and try to rise to the occasion. When the time comes, we should be ready to meet it squarely. God Almighty may enable you to do so.

Who will prevail?

Says God in the Holy Quran :

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كتب الله لاغلبن انا و رسلى

ان الله قوى عزيز

"Allah has decreed, most surely I will prevail, I and My Messengers. Verily, Allah is Powerful, Mighty".

(Al-Mujadilah 22)

★ ★

INTERNATIONAL MOOT ON DELIVERANCE OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS

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The international conference on 'the Deliverance of Jesus' from the Cross held by the Ahmadiyya Community in England on June 2, ended most successfully on June 4. The venue was the auditorium of the Common-wealth Institute of London.

The supreme spiritual head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III, graced the last session of the conference with his presence and addressed it for about an hour. Some 1500 guests consisting mostly of the delegates from various overseas Ahmadiyya communities participated. The High Commissioners of Mauritius, Liberia, Ghana and Sierra Leone and Some intellectuals of London also attended. Hundreds of non-Ahmadis, Christians also listened to the thought provoking address of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih.

The British Council of Churches released a press statement on this occasion, extending an invitation to the Ahmadiyya Community to have a friendly exchange of views on this subject. The text of the statement was read out in the conference by Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, ex-President of the International Court of Justice.

In his address, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih welcoming and accepting the invitation of British Council of Churches said that he would be very happy if the Roman Catholic Church also participates in such dialogues, and suggested that these friendly talks be held in London, Rome, West Africa, Asia, and the U.S.A., according to the conditions agreed upon by the parties concerned.

After this statement, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, spoke on "The deliverance of Jesus from the Cross" for an hour. At the end of the conference, its Convener Mr. Bashir Ahmad Khan Rafiq, Ahmadiyya Missionary, Incharge of the Ahmadiyya Mission in Britain, thanked Hazrat Khalifatul Masih for his gracing the conference with his presence and also all the participants, most of whom had come from far flung places in the world. He also thanked executives of the Commonwealth Institute of London who had co-operated whole-heartedly with the Mission in making this conference a success.

Ahmadiyya takes Islam to the Ends of the world

London Airport Welcome for Khalifatul Masih III

His Excellency the High Commissinor Gambia was one of a host of dignitaries and VIPs who went to London Airport to welcome Khalifatul Masih III to Britain. The Khalifa was taken immediately to a VIP lounge and then to a press interview where Journalists from many countries had gathered to meet him.

In a lively interview, conducted at several times in different languages, the Khalifa explained that it was both his duty and his privilege to come to Britain for the conference.

When he was asked what Jesus had to do with Islam he replied: "A very great deal, indeed."

He went on: "We believe in him as one of the true prophets of God. He is a prophet for us just as Moses is also a prophet for us. He is very important to us because he is one of the honoured company of Messengers and prophets sent by God for the guidance of mankind.

"So it is important to us to know and to set forth the correct history and true teachings of Jesus. That is why this conference has been organised.

"We believe that Jesus did not die on the Cross but recovered from his wounds and journeyed to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and India

"I think it is now well recognised that the people of Afghanistan, Kashmir, and some parts of India are of Jewish origin, that they are descended from some of the tribes of Israel that left Judea at the time of Great Dispersion.

"We want to bring the light of Islam to all people of all nations and so we have embarked upon a great evangelical project. This conference is part of that project."

The Khalifa went on! "We are establishing missionary centres throughout Western Europe—Britain, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. We are doing the same in both North and South America.

Already this great project is producing results. We have established several mosques in Europe. The mosque recently opened at Gotenburg, Sweden, was financed out of the contributions of the Ahmadis of Britain.

"We have established newspapers and magazines, health centres, hospitals, schools and colleges in widespread areas of the earth. It is our duty and privilege to do these things for our brothers and sisters and we do them with great cheerfulness.

"Eighty years ago there were only a few thousand of us. Today there are over ten million. In the near future there will be many millions in countries all over the world. That is not only our hope—it is a divine decree".

(Courtesy of Putney and Roehampton HERALD (London) - June 1, 1978.

(Continued from page 14)

in speech contest of both Atfal and Khuddam. The prize for the overall best activity for the Khuddam for the outgoing year was won by Abeokuta Mission while Ibadan Khuddam won the soccer cup newly donated to replace the former shield and the Majlis Khuddam of Ado-Ekiti Ikare won the prize for the tug of war. The seventh annual rally will be held at Ijebu-Ode during the Easter holidays in 1979 insha Allah. He wished the almost two thousand delegates who came from all the states of the federation a safe journey to their various destinations.

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An open letter to British Churchmen

The International Conference on "Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross", was held in London in June under the auspices of Ahmadiyya Mission in England. We are reproducing below the letter which the Imam of the London Mosque, Mr. B. A. Rafiq, sent in this connection to 490 Bishops and Churchmen in Britain. Outlining in it the thesis expounded by the Promised Messiah about the deliverence of Jesus from the Cross and the proofs with which he substantiated it, he invited their opinion about this issue and also requested them to attend the conference. The comments by the Churchmen will be published when received. (Editor)

Reverend Sir,

There are three currents of thought regarding the event of the Crucifixion of Jesus :

(a) The Jews and the Christians both hold that Jesus died *an accursed death* on the Cross ;

(b) Some Orthodox Muslims believe that Jesus was never put on the Cross but was raised bodily by God into heaven ;

(c) The Ahmadi Muslims believe that Jesus was put on the Cross but God Almighty so planned that he was removed from the Cross while he was still alive and having recovered completely he departed from Judea in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He lived to a good old age and died and was buried in Srinagar, Kashmir—India.

The above views of the Ahmadi Muslims and later opinions will be rationally presented at an International Conference on "Deliverence of Jesus from the Cross" which is scheduled to be held at the Commonwealth Institute, London, on June 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1978. This Conference is being organised by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam of Gt. Britain.

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (India) who claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Reformer of the present age. Under Divine guidance, he expounded the following theory :

(i) Jesus Christ did not die an accursed death on the Cross ;

(ii) he was medically alive when he was taken down from the Cross ;

(iii) he recovered from the ordeal on the Cross, was completely healed and appeared in flesh to several people ;

(iv) he travelled eastwards via Syria and Afghanistan to Kashmir

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in India where he died a natural death at a ripe old age of 120 years and

(v) he lies buried in a tomb at Khanyar Street, Srinagar, in India.

In support of his thesis, the Promised Messiah provided the following evidence :

(a) Just as Jonah was for three days and three nights in the belly of a whale, so was Jesus three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth. (Matt. 12 : 40). Like the prophet Jonah, Jesus swooned on the Cross and was mistaken to be dead. Like Jonah, he travelled eastwards to the lost tribes of Israel.

(b) The gospel accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John do not appear to be eye-witness accounts, (e.g. see John 19 : 35). The gospel of Barnabas, which has been rejected, makes no mention of death from Crucifixion.

(c) Death from Crucifixion usually arose when the legs were broken and the support from the feet removed. In the case of Jesus, he was spared this ordeal. (John 19 : 33).

(d) Even Pilate expressed his surprise when he heard that Jesus was dead, which shows that there was some doubt about his death even at the time of his crucifixion (Mark 15 : 44). Jesus was on the Cross for only a few hours (all four gospel accounts agree on this point).

(e) Jesus was in a state of swoon when he was removed from the Cross. Prior to this a Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear and immediately there came out blood and water (Matt. 27 : 49, and John 19 : 34). Blood, however, congeals after death and could only flow from a living body.

(f) Jesus is seen in the flesh after three days and appears to a number of his disciples in the same form as before. No medical evidence can be provided to substantiate the rising from the dead of anyone but one who is living. There is evidence of his disappearance into a cloudy mist but not of his rising into the heaven.

(g) Ample historical evidence exists to prove that Jesus travelled eastwards in search of the lost sheep of Israel and the tangible proof of the existence of a tomb at Khanyar Street in Srinagar, Kashmir, remains undisputed.

You, sir, being a learned scholar of the New Testament, may hold certain views. We shall be most grateful if you could kindly investigate the above (further details of the claims by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are obtainable from us) and let us have your own views so that we may enlighten ourselves and those who attend our Conference. Should you not wish your name to be published, your request will be treated with the strictest confidence.

You are also invited to attend this International Conference at which there will be an opportunity to ask any relevent questions on the subjects under discussion.

Yours faithfully,
B. A. RAFIQ
(Imam, London Mosque)

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Promised Messiah Day in Fiji

The Promised Messiah Day was celebrated fervently on March 23, 1978, in all Fijjian Ahmadiyya Communities. The National press had announced the news prominently and also the Radio Fijji. Hundreds of Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi men and women participated. Speeches were made by local intellectuals and Ahmadi Missionaries including Maulana Din Mohammad Shahid, M.A. Amir and Missionary Incharge Fiji ; and Maulana Sajjad Ahmad Khalid. The theme of the speeches was the Promised Messiah's service of Islam.

Maulana Din Mohammad's speech was broadcast by the National Radio. In this speech he had introduced the personality and work of the Promised Messiah. He had substantiated his thesis with numerous verses of the Holy Quran ; Traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) ; the Scriptures of other Faiths and the sayings of Muslim Divines. He had shown the truth of the Promised Messiah's claims and described in detail the services rendered by him to the cause of Islam and how he had made it prevail over all other religions. This speech was heard by hundreds of thousands of Fijjians.

The Islamo Christiano Association

The "Islamo Christiano" Association in Spain, working for the growth of friendship between Muslims and Christians has published in its monthly bulletine of February 1978 an article introducing Ahmadiyya Version of Islam. Outlining in it some of the points which are common between Ahmadis and the rest of Muslims it has stated that the main difference lies about the fate of Jesus Christ. While the non-Ahmadi Muslims believe that he is still alive with his body of clay, Ahmadis believe that he died a natural death on this earth and is buried in Sri Nagar, Kashmir, India. The article has exhorted its readers to promote peace and amity among themselves.

Mr. Mignel Epalza, Director of the Association, a Professor of Islamic Studies in Comilla University, takes keen interest in the study of Ahmadiyya Version of Islam. On his request, Choudhry Karam Ilahi Zafar, Ahmadiyya Missionary in Spain delivered two lectures on the life and personality of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) in the above mentioned University.

EXPORTERS
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Nasir Day Celebrations at Ahmadiyya Secondary School, Bo (Sierra Leone)

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By Mr. Habib Ahmad M. A.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III—the Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, graced the school with his blessed visit on 11th May, 1970. This was the proudest and most significant event of the school's entire history. Henceonward, the school, every year celebrates "Nasir Day" to revive the blissful memories associated with the historic visit.

As usual, this year the Day was commemorated on Thursday, 11th May, 1978. A grand meeting was held at 9.00 a.m. in the school hall under the chairmanship of Maulana Nasim Saifi—Amir and Missionary Incharge, Sierra Leone. Apart from the staff and students a great number of dignitaries attended the function which started with the recitation from the Holy Quran followed by the speech by the Principal Mr. B. A. Akhtar in which he threw light on the background of the ceremony. After the inaugural address of the Chairman, a declamation contest was held. Ten Ahmadiyya Secondary Schools sent their speakers to participate in the contest. Fourteen contestants spoke on different religious topics. Most of them dwelt on 'The Impact of the Hazur's visit on the country' and on 'Eradication of Social Evils'. The lively competition continued for two hours. It proved to be enlightening and inspiring for the audience. Two speakers from Freetown School spoke in Arabic.

Alhaj M. K. Bongay—the Secretary General of the Mission—gave an eye witness account of the Hazur's visit to Sierra Leone. His description of the holy visit was so vivid and lively that the audience felt that they were watching a documentary film of the event. The whole visit was revived in its minutest details. He is worthy of congratulation for his remarkable description.

Alhaji Rogers, one of the pioneer member of the Ahmadiyya Community in Sierra Leone, also addressed the audience. He traced the development of the Ahmadiyya Community in the country and applauded the heroic struggle of the pioneer missionaries. He well remembered that they worked untiringly to promote the cause of the community. They went about preaching on foot from village to village. He expressed his deep gratitude to God who, before his very eyes, had granted spectacular success to the Community. His speech had a great impact on the audience.

At 11.00 a. m. an exhibitionary football match was played at the school ground. The teams, selected from the senior classes, displayed a thrilling game for the entertainment of the onlookers. The spectators were greatly amused to witness the match

which lasted for one and half an hour.

At two O'clock a luncheon was given for the elite of the town and the staff members. About sixty persons attended the feast.

The next session of the meeting was held at 5 00 p.m. Maulana Nasim saifi chaired the meeting. After the recitation from the Holy Quran the Principal delivered his Annual speech. He gave a picturesque and detailed account of the school's last year life.

Then, the Guest speaker, Mr. E. R. Ndomahina, the Principal—Teachers Training College, Bo, delivered his speech. He pointed out that the educational effort in the country was facing a crisis. He remarked that the students were involved in drug-taking, immorality, drinking, cinema going and dancing, which were adversely affecting the educational process. He however appreciated the school's achievements and said that every effort was being made in this school in order to keep the students away from aforesaid evils. The speech was interspersed with enthusiastic applause. In the end a highly amusing and entertaining drama was staged by the school's dramaic society. Thus ended the 8th anniversary of the Nasir Day jubliations at 9.00 a.m. rejuvenating and spiritually uplifting the participants. They returned home as transformed and changed men.

An Ahmadi Scientist Honoured

According to a news item published in the Pakistan Times Lahore, of May 31, "Dr. Abdus Salam, a distinguished Pakistani scientist (who is an Ahmadi), has been unanimously named by the American Institute of Physics as the fourth recipient of the John Torrence State Medal for 'distinguished service to the profession of physics'.

"Dr. Salam has been selected for the award in recognition of his efforts in introducing and disseminating modern theoretical physics among the Third Countries.

"The presentation will be made at the Annual Corporate Associates Meeting to be held in Columbus, Ohio, USA, in September this year.

"Dr. Abdus Salam is presently director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy—APP."

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6th Annual Ijtema of Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya Nigeria

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By Olayiwola Iagede

"The organisation of the Khudam-ul-Ahmadiyya comprising the Ahmadi youths, is meant for the service of humanity, irrespective of religion, colour and creed. Ahmadi youths should try to improve their physical, moral and spiritual standard and serve the Jamaat and the whole nation sincerely and dedicatedly." said the Amir of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat M. A. Shahid while inaugurating the two-day sixth annual Ijtima (gathering) at Ikare, Ondo State during the last Easter holidays.

The Amir further advised the youths, who assembled from the different states of the Federation, that while keeping their separate entity, they should register themselves with the state youth councils and thus try to widen the scope of their service to all and sundry. The Amir expressed his satisfaction on the overall performance and progress of the Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya during the last year and advised them to establish the organisation in all the branches of the Jamaat.

Earlier, before the opening prayer, Khuddam recited the pledge and the Amir read out the message of the Sadr Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya Central Rabwah. who wished Ahmadiyya Youths to carry the message of the Imam of the age to all the good souls of the world.

The first session of the Ijtema was chairmanned by Alhaji Alli Adebayo, chairman of Ekiti/Akoko Circuit and was mainly for Atfalul-Ahmadiyya —Ahmadi children ranging from the age of seven to fifteen years. In his address to the children, he implored them to build their characters on the solid foundation of faith in Almighty. He urged them to strictly adhere to the true teachings of Islam right from this their youthful age. There were special events for the children which include running, jumping and speech contests.

The second session which was for the Khuddam started with recitation from the Holy Quran by Prof. A.G. Kaukab and a melodious recitation of an Arabic ode in praise of the Holy Prophet (S. A. W.), written by the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (A.S.) by Maulvi S.A. Shah. After hoisting the National and Khuddam flags, the reading of a welcome address by the host Mission Ikare, the Amir inspected a Guard of Honour mounted by the youths. He then declared the meeting open. Before the Youths went for football contest, they were addressed by Maulvi S. A. Azhar on the true meaning of Khatmun-Nabuwat. Other highlights of the Conference were tug of war contest, public preaching, speech contest, march out in the town, addresses by eminent scholars of the Mission and the foundation laying ceremony of the mission's mosque at Iyomoye Kwara State on Friday 24th instant by the Amir.

Before the occasion was rounded up, the Amir—Maulana M. A Shahid warned the youth not to be involved in criminal acts now rampant especially among the youths of this country and now a thing of grave concern for the government to extirpate. He gave prizes to those who came on top

(*Continued on page 8*)

Deliverance from The Cross

— II —

Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in England has recently published "Deliverance from the Cross" by Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, Ex-President of the United Nations. The booklet offers a deep insight into the life and death of Jesus Christ and is being serially reproduced in Tahrik-i-Jadid. Below are its 3rd and 4th chapters dealing with the Death and Shroud of Christ. (Ed.)

Thus, Jesus was condemned to be crucified and was taken to Golgotha, the place of execution. The multitude went on mocking him and reviling him from the sixth hour to the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama subachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. 27:47). Apparently, this exclamation was wrenched from him by the perplexity from wnich he began to suffer that so far as he could see there was no way of deliverance left open for him, and yet God had promised him deliverance and he wondered whether anything that he had done or had left undone since the divine promise served to cause offence to God. Stretched, as he was, on the cross he might have felt that the strain of the proceedings of the day and the ill treatment that he had undergone at the hands of the multitude were about to overcome his physical senses. He could not at that moment, have imagined that his loss of consciousness and his perception of his approaching end were the very means that God in His Wisdom, had designed for his deliverance.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the Scriptures might be fulfilled saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vingar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus there fore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost John (19: 28-30).

It is noteworthy that all four Evangelists use the same expression with regard to the termination of the tragedy upon the cross. It is not said that Jesus died, but that yielded or gave up the ghost.

Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost (Mark 15: 37) And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost (Luke 23: 46). When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19: 30).

Giving up the ghost has been understood as meaning that Jesus had died, but in view of scientific evidence that has recently come to light this expression acquires a different connotation altogether to which we shall presently advert.

Incidently, Jesus commending his spirit into the hands of the Father as mentioned in Luke, is consistent with his righteousness as prophet, but is not consistent with his alleged partnership in the Godhead.

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The Gospel account continues :

The Jews, therefore, because it was the prepartion that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. Two thieves had also been nailed to the cross at the same time with Jesus. Then came the soldiers,, and broke the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs : but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side. and forthwith came thereout blood and water (John 19 : 31-4).

After this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and though Pilate marvelled if Jesus were already dead : being satisfied on the point by the statement of the centurion (Mark 15 : 44-5) readily gave his leave. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never a man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day ; for the sepulchre was near at hand (John 19 : 38-42).

In this closing scene, the plan of God : 'The cnemies of Jesus devised their plans and God devised His plan ; God is the Best of planners' (3 : 55) ; can be clearly discerned. Jesus perceived that his end was approaching and cried out : 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' Immediately thereupon a sponge filled with vinegar was put up to him to drink. This, instead of affording him any relief, caused him to be suffocated and he cried out : It is finished. By that time it was dark and the order was given to break the legs of those who were hung upon the cross, but when the soldiers came to Jesus, it seemed to them that he was dead already and they did not break his legs, but one of them pierced his side with a spear and forthwith came thereout blood and water, which was an indication that blood had not stopped circulating. The spear had not touched the heart but had injured the lung. The strain under which Jesus had laboured during the day. his agony upon the cross, his drinking of the vinegar and the thrust of the spear in his side which injured the lung, all combined to bring about a condition in which his breathing stopped but the circulation of the blood continued. To all appearance he had died, but in truth, despite the semblance of death, he was alive. If he had continued in that state for some time, the circulation of blood would also have stopped, but it was God's plan that the process of his resuscitation should now come into operation.

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, an expert physician, now came and took charge of the body of Jesus, brought it down from the cross, wrapped him in a linen cloth, which was impregnated with spices, and laid him in a sepulchre which had been recently hewn out of a rock. There can be no doubt that Joseph and Nicodemus must have continued to minister unto Jesus in the strong hope of reviving him as nothing had happened that day which could persuade them to

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believe that Jesus had truly died. He was a young man of thirty-three, of good physique, enjoying good health right up to the moment of his apprehension and condemnation. It is true that a crown of thorns was placed over his head (Matt 27 : 29), which, though irritating and painful and causing him to bleed, could not have brought about his death. He was put upon the cross in the afternoon of Friday and had to be taken down from tne cross before sunset, in accordance with the law of Moses, which the Jews were anxious to observe, as their failure to do so would bring upon them God's displeasure. In such circumstances the device adopted of compassing the death of those who were still hanging upon the cross at the approaching of sunset was to break their legs, but the legs of Jesus were not broken, so when he was taken down from the cross all his limbs were in good condition.

The omission to break the legs of Jesus was obviously a part of the divine plan to rescue Jesus from the accursed death which his enemies were anxious to bring about.

It should also be remembered that though the word burial has been applied to Jesus, there was no actual burial involved. He was placed in a sepulchre which was like a chamber hewn out of the rock (Mark 15:46). The grave in which his body would be buried in case of death was not yet dug. The chamber in which he was placed was wide enough to permit people to enter into and move about in. Thus, nothing whatever had happened from which an inference of death could reasonably be drawn. That is why Pilate, who must have possessed a good deal of knowledge of these things, when told that Jesus had died, marvelled if he were already dead. As, however, he had been favourably inclined towards Jesus throughout, in consequence of the dream of his wife, he professed himself satisfied with the statement of the centurion about the death of Jesus and readily gave the order that the body may be handed over to Joseph of Arimathaea.

This is in exact accord with the affirmation of the Quran on the subject. We have already drawn attention to God's assurance to Jesus, according to the Quran, that he would die a natural death and would be spiritually exalted towards God, that is to say, he would not suffer death upon the cross. But there is a very significant and most emphatic affirmation in the Quran which confirms that which we have just stated: 'And their claiming: We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary who claimed to be the Messenger of God, whereas they slew him not, nor did they compass his death upon the cross, but the semblance of death was created for them.....They have no definite knowledge about it, but only follow conjecture; they certainly did not compass his death; indeed, God exalted him to Himself; God is Mighty, Wise' (4:158-9).

Several biographers of Jesus have, in recent years, expressed grave doubts about his death on the cross. According to them all the circumstances surrounding the event of the crucifixion point very strongly to the probability that he escaped such a death. For instance: 'Pilate, then, would have liked to save Jesus...According to a tradition, Jesus found a supporter in the wife of the Procurator himself... and the idea that the blood of this beautiful young man was about to be spilt, weighed upon her mind. Certain it is that Jesus found Pilate prepossessed in his favour. The Gover-

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nor questioned him with kindness, and with the desire to find an excuse for sending him away pardoned.'[1]

Therefore Pilate endeavoured to release him, but the Jews cried out: 'If thou release this man, thou art no friend of Caesar Whosoever claimeth to be a king denieth the claim of Caesar.' On hearing these words Pilate brought Jesus forth and sat down on the judgment-seat in a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was the preparation—day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews: Behold your King; but they cried out: Away with him, crucify him. Pilate said to them: Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest replied: We have no King but Caesar. When Pilate perceived that his efforts were of no avail, but on the contrary a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. All the people replied: His blood be on us, and on our children. Their clamours, and those of the chief priests prevailed; for Pilate, desirous to satisfy the multitude, gave sentence that their demand should be executed. So he released to them Barabbas, imprisoned on account of sedition and murder, whom they had desired, and delivered Jesus to them to be crucified.[2]

'Crucifixion was a much more lingering kind of death, and, in its earlier, much less excruciating than we are apt to imagine, or than otherwise it would have been. As there was but little loss of blood-the nails that pierced the extremities touching no large blood—vessel and closing the wounds they made—the death which followed resulted from the processes of bodily exhaustion and irritation; and these were so slow that in no case, where the person crucified was in ordinary health and vigour, did they terminate within twelve hours. Almost invariably he survived the first twenty—four hours, lived generally over the second, occassionally even into the fifth or sixth day. The ancient testimonies to this fact are quite explicit, nor are modern ones wanting, although there are but few parts of the world now where crucifixion is practised.'[3]

'A fact of importance to be known, but which has not been sufficiently regarded, is that crucifixion was a very lingering punishment, and proved fatal not so by loss of blood, since the wounds in the hands and feet did not lacerate any large vessel, and were nearly closed by the nails which produced them, as by the slow process of nervous irritation and exhaustion. This would of course be liable to variety, depending on differences of age, sex, constitution, and other circumstances; but for person to live two or more days on the cross was a common occurence, and there are even instances of some who, having been taken down in time and carefully treated, recovered and survived. In many cases death was partly induced by hunger and thirst, the vicissitudes of heat and cold, or the attacks of ravenous birds and beasts; and in others was disignedly accelerated by burning, stoning, suffocation, breaking the bones, or piercing the vital organs.'[4]

'But the sudden death of a

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1. Renan, Ernest, Life of Jesus Christ, p. 352.
2. Stroud, William, On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, p. 39.
3. Hanna, William, The Life of Christ, Vol. III, pp. 325—29.
4. Stroud, William, On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, p. 55.

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young and robust man, after a crucifixion of only six hours, was extraordinary, and to them unaccountable'. 5

'Rationlism has principally its adhesion to the former opinion. The short time that Jesus hung on the cross, together with the otherwise ascertained tardiness of death by crucifixion, and the uncertain nature and effects of the wound from the spear appeared to render the reality of death doubtful'.6

'And yet, as he might be in a syncope—as instances had been known in which men apparently dead had been taken down from the cross and resuscitated—and as the lives of the soldiers would have had to answer for any irregularity, one of the soldiers drove the broad head of his hesta into his side'.7

'It is evident, in fact, that doubts arose as to the reality of the death of Jesus. A few hours of sususpension on the cross appeared to those accustomed to see crucifixions entirely insufficient to bring about such a result. They cited many instances of persons crucified, who had been removed in time and brought to life again by energetic treatment. Origen, later on, thought it needful to invoke a miracle in order to explain so sudden an end. The same surprise is discovered in the narrative of Mark. Pilate was astonished that Jesus was so soon dead'.8

The ordinary sufferings incidental to crucifixion have been minutely analysed by Richter, the Batholines, Gruners, etc., and are often injudiciously exaggerated, in order to account for the speedy occurrence of the Saviour's death. Richter's explanation of them, as quoted in a note of the Pictorial Bible on John 19 : 18, is somewhat fanciful and overstrained ; yet after all the author acknowledges that they were not calculated to occasion rapid death... Concurring in this opinion, the Editor of the Pictorial Bible observes : "It may be added, that no act in the punishment of crucifixion was in itself mortal, the sufferer died rather from the continuance and increase of the unutterable anguish and exhaustion of his torturing position", and then subjoins the account. already cited from Josephus, of a person known to that historian, who had been crucified apparently for several hours, but having been taken down from the cross, and committed to medical care, survived and recovered. In their laborious attempts to prove that for sometime before his death Christ was reduced to a state of extreme debility, the Gruners strongly insist on the accessory or subordinate suffering of crucifixion as materially concurring with the principal ones in producing this effect ; but on an impartial examination of the matter, their insufficiency is obvious. The scourging, mockery, and labour of carrying the cross were not in themselves more distressing to Jesus than to the malefactors who accompanied him ; his fasting and watching had not, at farthest, continued longer than from the preceeding evening ; his removal from place to place was not likely to be attended with much fatigue, since all the places lay within a narrow compass ; and heat of climate could not have been very oppressive in Jerusalem at the vernal equinox to a native of the country ; more especially when it is considered that during the last three hours of

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5 Ibid, p. 133.
6. Straus, Frederick, Life of Jesus, p. 750.
7. F W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, Vol, 2, pp. 423—4.
8. Renan, Erneet, The Life of Jesus, p. 371.

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his life, from the sixth to the ninth hour, the sun was obscured, and that in the much hotter climate of Central Africa crucified persons usually live three days on the cross'.[9]

'Of the death of Christ we would have no evidence—considering how difficult it is to establish the fact of death in many cases—but for the very definite statement found in a single Gospel: For after six hours of crucifixion, the two thieves were found to be still alive. The death of Christ is attributed to his being speared by a soldier, according to the fourth Gospel; but it is remarkable that nothing about this is found in the other three detailed accounts of the crucifixion. If we follow it, it becomes possible to suppose that some friends may have revived him in the tomb and may have facilitated his escape—leaving the cerements folded in the sepulchre—so that a natural interpretation is afforded of his being afterwards seen at dusk on the road to Emmaus and at dusk in a house of Jerusalem, as well as, also at dusk on the shores of the Lake Tiberias somewhat later'.[10]

"There is the theory of those who assert that our Lord did not really die upon the cross, that his supposed death was no more than a temporary swoon, and that his resurrection was simply his return to consciousness. In defence of this are urged—the rapidity of his death, in contrast with the slowness with which death by crucifixion generally took place; the fact that persons are known to have recovered who had been crucified and taken down from the cross as dead; the effect that would be produced by the cool air of the rock-hewn-sepulchre, as well as by the aromatic spices with which the body had been prepared for burial—and the conclusion is drawn that apparent restoration of life is thus sufficiently and easily accounted for'.[11]

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'In the book of John in the Holy Bible we have one of the interesting facts concerning the crucifixion which appears in the ancient records from which I am quoting, and which incident is overlooked by the most critical of Bible students. It is that although it was a common practice to break the legs of the crucified persons, and to cause these bodies to hang upon the cross for several days so there would be no possibility of the body remaining alive, nevertheless the body of Jesus was taken down without the bones being broken, even though the soldiers broke the bones of the other two criminals that were upon the crosses close by. This was not an oversight on the part of the soldiers by any means, for not only did they fulfil the law by breaking the bones of the criminals but they had been so accustomed to this procedure for many years that we cannot believe that after having performed their duty with the other two they would forget the practice, momentarily, in the case of third body upon the cross. The ancient records to which I have been referring state that when the soldiers were notified that the body must be taken down immediately because a release had come, and that everything must be done to permit Jesus to regain his consciousness and strength if he had not passed through transition, they realised that they were not to injure, to torture,

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9. Stroud, William, On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, pp. 123-4.
10. Forlong, James, Faiths of Men, Vol. I, pp. 422-3.
11. Milligen, William, The resurrection of our Lord, pp. 76-7.

or in any way affect the case and comfort of Jesus, but to relieve him as quickly as possible the agony in which they found him.

'It may be interesting to call attention to the fact that no-where in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is the positive statement as an observation of one of those disciples that Jesus died on the cross or that he was dead when they removed him from the cross and placed him in the tomb'.[12]

Beginning with the closing years of the nineteenth century as time has passed evidence has become progressively available which puts it beyond doubt that Jesus did not die on the Cross. We shall now proceed to set forth one item, a most important one, of that evidence.

SHROUD

The entire material relating to the subject of the Holy Shroud of Turin, as it has come to be called, reproduced in this section, is extracted from *Inquest on Jesus Christ* by John Reban, as translated from the German by Willi Frischauer. The foreword is by R. H. Havercraft.

A short statement of the history of the shroud, so far as is known with certainty, is set out in chapter three of that book. Since 1568, the shroud has been kept in Turin Cathedral in the chapel of the Dukes of Savoy. Every thirty-three years it is exhibited to the public. When it was exhibited in 1898, some attempt was made to photograph it but at that time photographic techniques were in their infancy. At the time of its next exhibition in 1931, steps were taken to subject it to minute photographic examination. A series of photographs were taken with the utmost care which revealed certain surprising and previously unsupected features that enabled the students of the Shroud to go on to make certain astonishing deductions.

The negative of one of the photographs revealed a most important feature of the Shroud, which is that a positive picture appears on the photographic negative. On the negative imprint, the bloodstains also appear as the negative of the picture, while the contours of a body appear as a positive. Scientists take this phenomenon as proofs that the imprint is not the work of an artist. It is difficult enough to reproduce the positive of a picture with such delicate light shadings, but to achieve a perfect negative by artificial means is quite impossible. The biggest enlargements of the photographs established that there is no trace of any dye whatsoever on the fabric.

It would seem that the Shroud acted as a kind of photographic plate because it had been impregnated with a solution of aloes, which reacted chemically on the spices which, as the Gospels describe, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus used on the body of Jesus for his resusc tation. As a result, the Shroud bears the image of the body which was laid on it. It also reveals that bleeding from the body took place after it was laid in the Shroud.

In 1959 The German Research Convention For The Shroud of Jesus petitioned Pope John XXIII to permit a small portion of the Shroud to be removed so that further tests, made possible by modern scientific discoveries and techniques, could be carried out. They

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12. H. Spencer Lewis, The Mystical Life of Jesus, pp. 270—71.

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wanted the bloodstains to be subjected to chemical and microscopic examination: the texture of the Shroud itself could be examined in the light of X-Rays, infra-red rays and ultra-violet rays; and an exact dating of the Shroud could be made by means of an atom clock, the carbon 14 process. The petition was rejected, not apparently by the Pope, but by the authorities in Turin. Recently, however, the present Pope, Paul VI, seems to have granted the necessary permission and it is expected that a small portion of the Shroud might become available in April 1978 for further scientific investigation.

This book says that we can be certain that Jesus did not want to die on the cross-hence his fear of death as described by the Evangelists. Where death is welcome, fear holds no sway over man. Although Jesus knew that his suffering was necessary and inevitable, he could not have wanted to die on the accursed wood the gallows, the cross. His fear of death is revealed to us in this fascinating and significant prayer: 'And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt' (Matt. 26; 39).

We can conclude from this passage that a man prepared to die of his own free will and to offer himself for sacrificial death is unlikely to fall on his face and pray in anguish that the cup may pass from him.

The problem appears in an entirely different light if one knows that the contemporary (not the currently available) text of the books of the Prophets suggested that Jesus would have to suffer much for mankind but would in the end, be saved by God and rise again. It explains his curious fear of death which does not seem to fit into pattern of Christian teaching. Jesus knew he would be captured, indicted, scourged, and crucified, but was certain he would be saved, rise again, and live on. For this was the message of many prophecies in the Old Testament texts which were available in his time.

Knowledge of the road he had to take was heavy on his mind. Roman execution techniques had been so well perfected that there seemed little hope the prophets' predictions would be fulfiilled. Nevertheless, he had to act as the Holy Scriptures and the will of God ordained. How much reason Jesus had to fear death emerges clearly from Mark, 14: 36: 'Abba, Father, All things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt'. In the most direct and explicit manner Jesus implored God, the Father, to spare him: 'Take away this cup from me'. The clear, definite, and certain conclusion is: Jesus did not want to die on the cross.

Today, we are in a position to add—a statement borne out by scientific proof as we shall see later—that God, the Father, to whom Jesus prayed answered the son's prayer and let the cup of death pass by; we can even say that He never intended to let Jesus die on the cross.

It is a contention for which this volume provides the most extensive and detailed proof.

All the relevant original documents relating to the Shroud were in the hands of Pope Pius XI, and his staff of experts spent many years examining and verifying them. On 6 September 1936, Pope summed up the result of these examinations in the following pronounce-

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ment :

These are the images of the Divine Redeemer. We might say they are the most beautiful, most moving and dearest we can imagine. They derive directly from the object surrounded by mystery which—this can safely be said—it has now been established is no product of human hands. It is the Holy Shroud at Turin. We say it is surrounded by mystery because much remains unexplained about this affair, which is certainly holy as no other is. But this much can be said—it is absolutely certain that it is not the work of man.

This unequivocal statement by the highest authority of the Roman church acknowledging the authenticity of the Shroud, was published on 7/8 September 1926, in the *Osservatore Romano*, the official organ of the Vatican.

Five Roman Popes have honoured this relic with their indulgence—Sixtus IV, Julius II, and Gregory XIII. This is what Pope Benedict XIV, an authority on controversial religious questions, had to say about it :

The Shroud, a very special memento of our Lord, is kept at Turin, and the Popes have confirmed that it is identical with the Shroud in which Jesus was wrapped.

More than thirty other Roman Popes have also recognised the Shroud, including Pope Pius XI, who was an archaeologist and scientist of world-wide repute.

If God had wanted to uphold Jesus, he would have had to save him and surely not to let him die on the cross, which Moses called the accursed wood.

Jesus himself was confident that he would be saved as the Bible predicted. But one can understand that, as the climax on the cross approached — the decisive moment in the history of religion—even Jesus began to doubt and lose hope. My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me ?

Jesus knew that, if he died on the cross, it meant, according to the laws of Moses, that God had forsaken him. These laws entitle the Jewish people to say: God did not uphold Jesus, for he died on the cross!

The history of the Jews shows throughout that, as far as they were concerned, death on the accursed cross was the end. But God did save Jesus and did not let him die on the cross ; saved him as the Holy Scriptures had prophesied and as the rabbis themselves expected that God would save the Messiah. The genuine Shroud of Jesus provides positive proof.

After years of intensive study of the Shroud Dr. Theodor Hirt Professor at a German University, submitted the results of his research to the Congregation Secretary at the Vatican. He summed up his submission that the imprint visible on the Shroud was, in fact, the imprint of a body and it reveals :

1. A stab from a lance, but no injury to the heart ;

2. Evidence of activity of the heart during the removal of the body from the cross, and

3. Incontrovertible evidence of activity of the heart after the body had been removed from the cross and placed in the shroud.

The evidence that had become available was brought to the know-

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ledge of many people, further enquiries were initiated and many experts were questioned Time and again, they accepted the evidence as scientifically correct and reliable To obtain completely objective replies, it was the practice in many instances not to mention Jesus Christ at all. The aim was to get opinions based on purely scientific grounds uninfluenced by religious considerations.

The result is that the fact that the heart of Jesus was beating after his body was removed from the cross has been proved beyond doubt and cannot be contradicted.

At the end of his exposition, which set out in detail the evidence furnished by the photographs and conclusions to be drawn therefrom, Professor Hirt said :

I should like to sum up by emphasising once more that we have much evidence and so many testimonials about the activity of the heart in the body of Jesus during and after his removal from the cross that it can never be disproved.

Mr. Solomon, who by a strange coincidence had provided the occasion for the exposition by Professor Hirt at Cologne, on return to New York gave a circle of intimate friends an account of the whole affair and at the end of it he observed :

You cannot imagine how confused I was when I left Cologne University, I jumped into a taxi and went to the nearest Pan-American Airways office to make a booking for New York, collected my things from the hotel, and was just in time to catch the plane. These discoveries about the Shroud strike you who are Christians differently ; but I am a Jew and these things are more important to me as a Jew than as a journalist. I recovered my composure only when I was seated in the aircraft. The long flight gave me an opportunity to think the matter over quietly. Sleep was out of the question.

How can I describe it ? In my head thoughts revolved around the sentence : Jesus did not die on the cross. From this followed the realization : This means that we Jews did not murder him, could not have murdered him.

Perhaps you cannot understand how I feel ; within a few hours. I was forced to make a personal decision. It is true that in the first instance I had taken it all in as a journalist ; but who can divide himself in a matter like this ? It affects Christians like you in your own way, and Jews like us in our way—but just as strongly. To us it becomes evident that, if we Jews could not have murdered Jesus it follows that he was what he told us he was—our Messiah. This was the only reason why for almost two thousand years Jews could not believe in Jesus Christ!

But this changes everything. In our blindness, we Jews tried to murder him and believed that we had done so. Because of this blindness He cast us out from the land of our Fathers. For nearly two thousand years He has let us be punished and chastised directly and indirectly. But because our guilt as it appears now, was not complete, He has opened the doors of the land of our Fathers to us again.

(To be continued)

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